

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

COME-00 TRSE-00 SAM-01 FEAE-00 INT-05 /072 W

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R 161312Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7575

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12895

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: UR RO ETRD EFIN PFOR COMECON

SUBJECT: MOVEMENT IN ROMANIAN-SOVIET ECONOMIC RELATIONS

1. DURING FAREWELL CALL ON SENIOR ECONOMIST IN BOGOMOLOV INSTITUTE WHO HAS BEEN VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON SOVIET-EE RELATIONS OVR PAST THREE YEARS, DEPARTING EMBASSY ECONOMIC OFFICER ASKED ABOUT CURRENT STATUS OF SOVIET ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ROMANIA. EMBOFF NOTED RECENT SERIES OF REPORTS OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC CONTACTS, INCLUDING VISIT OF MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE PATON TO MOSCOW FOR TALK WITH GOSPLAN CHIEF BAIBAKOV.

2. ECONOMIST SAID THAT THINGS ARE INDEED IMPROVING. ROMANIANS ARE HAVING SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, HE ALLEGED, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY APPARENT. HE SAID THEY HAVE ASKED SOVIETS FOR MORE INDUSTRIAL PROJECT ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS RAW MATERIALS. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S DIRECT QUESTION, CONFIDENTIAL

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ECONOMIST SAID THAT SOVIETS "HAVE PROMISED" THE ROMANIANS SOME

OIL AND EXACT AMOUNT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT MIXED INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING IN BUCHAREST IN OCTOBER. ROMANIANS WILL ALSO GET SOME OTHER RAW MATERIALS WHICH THEY HAVE REQUESTED. SOVIETS ARE GENUINELY TRYING TO BE HELPFUL. BILATERAL INDUSTRIAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTED IN PRESS.

3. COMMENT. IF TRUE, AND SOURCE HAS PROVED RELIABLE IN PAST, SOVIET SHIPMENT OF CRUDE OIL TO ROMANIANS, THEREBY EASING TO SOME EXTENT NECESSITY OF PAYING HARD CURRENCY AT WORLD MARKET PRICES TO IRAN, WILL BE IMPORTANT SOVIET MOVE. ROMANIANS HAVE, AS OFTEN REPORTED, BEEN REGULARLY ASKING SOVIETS FOR OIL OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AND UP TO NOW RESPONSE HAS ALWAYS BEEN NEGATIVE. STOESEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW12895
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760314-0321
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760850/aaaabrnh.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOVEMENT IN ROMANIAN-SOVIET ECONOMIC RELATIONS
TAGS: ETRD, EFIN, PFOR, UR, RO, COMECON
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006